



THE COUNSELLORS' & PSYCHOTHERAPISTS ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA (INC) (CAPAV)

SUBMISSION

ON

Best Practice Self-Regulation Model for Psychotherapy and Counselling in Australia

INTRODUCTION

The Counsellors' and Psychotherapists' Association of Victoria Incorporated (CAPAV) was formed in 2001 to provide a professional association for Counsellors and Psychotherapists in Victoria.

CAPAV is also committed to promoting the Counselling and Psychotherapy profession in the wider community.

The Counsellors' and Psychotherapists' Association of Victoria Incorporated (CAPAV) has been formed to:

- Provide a forum for networking
- Promote self regulation of counsellors and psychotherapists
- Promote ethical standards amongst counsellors and psychotherapists
- Encourage professional development of counsellors and psychotherapists
- Improve the quality of counselling and psychotherapy provision to the community
- Promote counselling and psychotherapy to the public
- Establish a common voice to members

CAPAV delivers:

- Membership categories that are structured to allow maximum recognition of individual Counsellors' and Psychotherapists' experience and achievements
- A register of clinical members on the CAPAV website
- E-Newsletter published three times per annum - In the Loop
- Notification of seminars throughout the year, within the newsletter In the Loop
- A quarterly journal - Psychotherapy in Australia
- Events of interest to members for their continuing professional development in the form of special interest groups
- Professional recognition through CAPAV's membership of the Psychotherapy & Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA)

COMMENT ON THE SUBMISSION

The formalisation of bodies such as CAPAV has ensured the following:

- That members have attained training and education that meets rigorous standards set by PACFA
- That associate and clinical members are required to undertake continuing supervision and professional development (both these activities are audited by CAPAV)
- That associate and clinical members are required to have full insurance
- That CAPAV requires all clinical, associate and student members to work by the Code of Ethics and Rules of Association

CAPAV fully supports and endorses the report and findings prepared by Professor Margot Schofield on Best Practice Self-Regulation Models for Psychotherapy and Counselling in Australia.

This submission is aimed at supporting the development of a best practice model for self-regulation of the counselling and psychotherapy professions in Australia. CAPAV believes this is a transitional step towards a preferred position of a national statutory regulatory system on a similar basis to the provisions that have been adopted in the Intergovernmental Agreement of 26th March 2008 that commits the states, territories and the Commonwealth to a national registration scheme for the health and allied health professions.

CAPAV recommends that key government incentives be provided to treat the professions of counselling and psychotherapy as competent contributors to the development of a comprehensive, equitable and accessible source of emotional and social health and wellbeing through liaison with the Australian Register of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (ARCAP). ARCAP is the most appropriate single credentialing system that will bring together members of both the Australian Counselling Association (ACA) and the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA).

Such incentives would include:

- 1.0 Recognition of counsellors and psychotherapists as an allied health profession under the allied health and chronic disease plans, Work Cover and as a source of qualified mental health professionals and other funded counselling services
- 2.0 Access to employment positions designated as requiring the competencies of persons listed on the ARCAP
- 3.0 Recognition of the minimum standards established in the ARCAP for counselling and psychotherapy services to be granted the same status in laws and regulations as is applied to professional associations recognised under Part 9 of the Private Health Insurance (Accreditation) Rules 2008
- 4.0 Inclusion of Counsellors and Psychotherapists in government funded schemes such as Medicare payments and specialised subsidised counselling programs, crisis counselling, to support early intervention and other allied health programs on a client sensitive and cost effective manner, within the allied health and chronic disease plans

CAPAV supports further research into the following:

- The relationship between different levels and types of training, practitioner competence and client outcomes through program such as the UK CORE system of engagement with the professions.
- The processes of supervision that improves practitioner competence, to inform development of supervisor training and recognition standards
- Mapping of requirements for mental health practitioners against the National Practice Standards for the Mental Health Workforce
- Cost-effectiveness analysis of counselling and psychotherapy in different work contexts

CAPAV believes it will be important to provide an effective public education program that enables greater social inclusion and access to qualified health and allied health services for persons seeking clinical and professional psychotherapeutic and counselling services.

CAPAV recommends the following:

- that the Practitioner Regulation Sub-Committee of the Health Workforce Principal Committee review the proposed single national credentialing system for unregulated health professions that has been adopted in principle for ARCAP by the Counselling and Psychotherapy professions
- that the ARCAP model be accepted as a transitional model for these professions until an alternative statutory regulatory model has been presented for wider community consultation in respect of any subsequent national registration system
- that AHMAC accept that if statutory regulation is not a readily available option, that the alternative self-regulatory single national credentialing system for counsellors and psychotherapists be adopted as an interim measure to obviate discrimination in government policy and practices between regulated, partially regulated and as yet unregulated health and allied health professions.


CONCLUSION

The ARCAP model would provide the following:

- a best practice model for the profession of counsellors and psychotherapists
- a reduction in government spending due to an increased number of health professionals
- the public would be granted access to an expanded service recognised by government

In essence, this submission offers an increased potential for the engagement of the counselling and psychotherapy field to be recognised by government regulators and funds which will lead to improved the health and safety the general public.

CAPAV request that the DHS look at statutory regulation. However, in the absence of statutory regulation, CAPAV propose that the ARCAP model be adopted.



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CAPAV